Sandhi Chardonnay 2011 Santa Barbara

14 Feb 2013 by Jancis Robinson

From $22.99, £26.95

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Forgive repetition but Raj Parr's Central Coast Chardonnays, and Pinot Noirs, just get better and better. I recommended as wine of the week any Sandhi 2009 Chardonnay. You can read the background to this new label there.

Raj was in London this week with another talented producer of refined California Pinot Noir Jamie Kutch and people, mainly sommeliers, were so impressed by his wines that UK importers Roberson have only limited quantities of Sandhi wines left. Look out particularly for **Sandhi Bentrock Chardonnay 2010 Sta Rita Hills** that is in theory just under £50 a bottle retail from Roberson ($85 from Zachy's in New York) except that Roberson are sold out. Look out for it on restaurant wine lists in the UK or seize Zachy's stock while it lasts. The vineyard, also known as Salsipuedes for its Point Concepción Pinots, is only six years old but both Julia and I thought the wine was stunning - just as fine as a white burgundy at the same price.

Much more open and readier to drink is **Sandhi Chardonnay 2011 Santa Barbara**, the most basic of his Chardonnays. It's already a lovely drink. Here are Julia's excellent notes from a tutored tasting organised in the basement of Roberson:

Average vine age 30 years from 17 different vineyards, each fermented in oak separately. 2011 was a particularly cool and foggy vintage. 2,000 cases made (the others are only 100-200 cases). 5% new oak. All François Frères 600-litre casks. Diatomaceous, clay and limestone soils. East- and north-facing slopes. Bought some old barrels to start (eg from Jim Clendenen of Au Bon Climat). Bottled after 11 months in oak
Very pale. Fragrant, delicate, hint of spice. Touch of melon and citrus. Naturally high acid. Pure and fresh and delicate. Creamy and intensely fresh on the palate. 'Happy wine'. Very aromatic for Chardonnay. So supple. (JH) 13.5%

She gave it 17 points out of 20 and suggested drinking it between 2013 and 2015. Roberson are asking £26.95 a bottle for it. (Buy it from Zachy's if you can..)

I tasted it at a very crowded, narrow dinner table with a crowd of those sommeliers who presumably bought up all the Bentrock. It was pretty difficult to take proper notes, which is my excuse for the following pathetic description of the wine: V fresh and lively and burgundian. Yummy and fresh. Biggest vol. 17 Drink 2013-15

Go and buy it!

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